

**Performance and Finance Select Committee****4<sup>th</sup> November 2008****Audit Commission Inspection of Waste Management Service****SUMMARY:**

This purpose of this Report is to inform the Performance and Finance Select Committee (PFSC) of progress in developing an Action Plan to implement the recommendations of The Audit Commission's inspection of the council's waste management service.

**Audit Commission Recommendations**

The inspectors left us with five recommendations for improving our waste services and our internal approach to environmental sustainability. These are:

**Recommendation 1**

**R1** Develop a strategic approach to enforcement activity. In particular the Council should:

- identify all available staff resources that might contribute to enforcement activity;
- engage all relevant regulatory services to ensure all sources of intelligence are used;
- ensure resources are deployed in a targeted manner to deliver an annual enforcement programme; and
- ensure appropriate links are made to educational programmes.

**Progress:**

**Any solution will be heavily influenced by the outcome of the council's ongoing high level service review agenda. A range of service and VFM reviews will be undertaken by the Improvement and Efficiency Board and the council's enforcement functions will be subject to that process. Officers must await the outcome of that review before fully implementing actions to address this recommendation.**

**Meanwhile, the review will be supported by work being undertaken by E&C's Regulatory Theme Group which intends reviewing waste enforcement powers covering:**

- **Flytipping (SC/EH)**
- **Waste storage / duty of care (SC/EH)**

- **Site waste management plans (PLN/SC/BC/EH)**
- **Compulsory recycling (SC)**
- **Packaging regulations (TS)**
- **Waste issues relevant to Pollution Prevention & Control Regulations (EH/PLN)**

**This work includes the development of a Common Compliance Project which has so far collated a database of non-compliant businesses in Brent.**

**The Graffiti Partnership Board’s work introduced a more strategic approach to enforcement issues for graffiti and tagging vandalism. Since the Audit Commission visit, the Board’s approach has resulted in thirteen young people being apprehended or arrested. The council will go out to consultation on a new Graffiti Policy in November 2008, to give a longer term, more strategic focus to tackling graffiti. Separate paper with PFSC.**

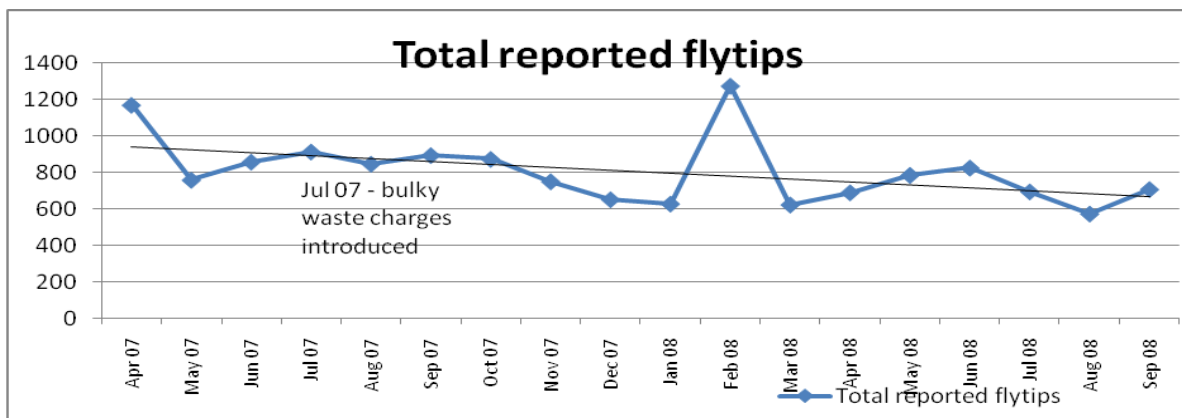
## **Recommendation 2**

**R2 Give greater priority to tackling the problem of trade waste in the borough. In particular, the Council should:**

- work with the Council's own household waste contractor to explore what support they can provide;
- engage local groups representing businesses, including private landlords, small and medium enterprises (including those from black and minority ethnic communities) building on environmental training and advice planned in Town Centres, and larger businesses, to identify solutions specific to each of their sectors; and
- focus on action to minimise waste, including promotion of the business benefits of producing less waste, reusing materials and recycling.

### **Progress:**

**The StreetCare Enforcement Team has been bolstered by one additional officer and a programme to tackle trading waste dumping in town centres has been implemented. This is starting to have effect. Fly-tipping incidents are reducing and the number of investigations and formal enforcement actions are increasing. (see below).**



	Apr-08	May-08	Jun-08	Jul-08	Aug-08	Sep-08
investigation:	63	183	152	367	213	224
warning letter:	14	72	49	77	81	70
statutory notice:	21	17	43	46	43	73
fixed penalty notice:	23	18	37	17	45	33
duty of care inspection:	20	112	92	255	150	116
formal caution:	2	1	3	2	2	0
prosecution	3	5	4	1	0	4

**A leaflet explaining the benefits of waste minimisation and recycling has been produced and is currently being issued to businesses.**

### **Recommendation 3**

**R3** Increase the pace of implementation of waste minimisation across the Council. In particular:

- provide internal recycling facilities in all buildings occupied by the Council; and
- ensure all Council services implement waste minimisation practices.

**Progress:**

**Office recycling bins have been installed in nearly all council offices. Operational difficulties have impeded progress in a very few places. Some units, like StreetCare, are monitoring use of office rubbish and recycling bins. Monitoring data will be used to improve officer practices. In the new year a Sustainability Communications Campaign will launch. The focus will be on staff and residents. The campaign is going through its planning stages at the moment.**

### **Recommendation 4**

**R4** Ensure consistent monitoring of the profile of customers by ethnicity, age, disability and gender to:

- identify any specific groups who are not accessing the service or participating in initiatives in the numbers expected; and
- enable targeted promotion and other action to be taken to address any issues identified.

**Progress:**

**An integral part of the compulsory recycling project includes the gathering of data relating to non-recycling households. The Recycling Advisors speak directly with residents and register information on**

**ethnicity, disability, age and gender if these are specifically given as reasons for non-participation.**

**Since the Audit Commission Report, the council has consulted on the adoption of a new waste policy statement. Information relating to ethnicity, disability and gender was gathered from responses to this consultation.**

**Our Complaints Team also now records diversity information when residents choose to give it.**

**StreetCare has started a project to identify from available data:**

- **Which groups are more likely to put in Stage 1 complaints**
- **Which parts of the borough generate the most number of Stage 1 complaints**
- **How Stage 1 complaints link to MOSAIC-generated information, such as income levels, and so on**
- **Whether there are parts of the borough which have a consistently lower environmental quality in relation to StreetCare's services (for example litter, detritus, graffiti, flyposting, flytipping, number of trees), complaints levels, and how these have changed over recent years.**

**The results of the data analysis project will give us a broader view of where we can better target resources and improvement works.**

**The project is due to report by March 09.**

## **Recommendation 5**

**R5 Evaluate whether the investment in StreetCare's ward-based approach to service delivery represents value for money, by:**

- **undertaking a rigorous analysis of the costs and benefits.**

### **Progress:**

**Again, solutions will be heavily influenced by the outcome of the council's ongoing transformation agenda. A range of service and VFM reviews will be undertaken by the Improvement and Efficiency Board and StreetCare's contract monitoring functions will be subject to that process. Officers must await the outcome of that review before implementing actions to address this recommendation.**